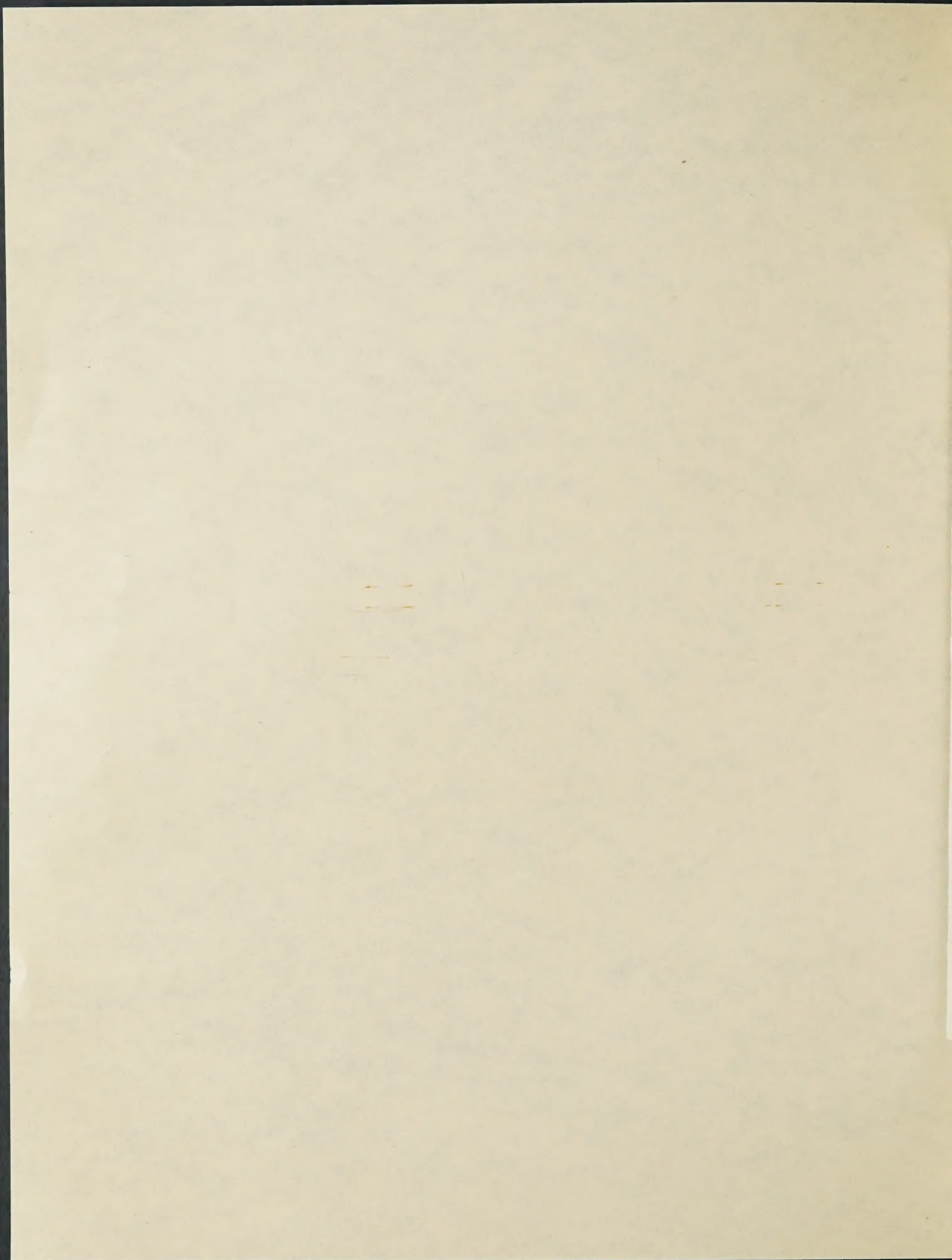


The bonne Entente

1917/18 (006)



The Bonne Entente

Extracted from XXXVII

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THE BONNE ENTENTE

HOW IT BEGAN; WHAT IT HAS DONE,
AND ITS IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME

During the summer of 1916 it was keenly realized by several gentlemen in Ontario that unless something were done to improve the drift of feeling between the two principal races in Canada, as affected especially by the relations of the two largest provinces, national unity in the Dominion might become endangered and the good feeling which the opening of the war brought into action might disappear. This matter was discussed at several informal conferences, which resulted in a larger meeting at the National Club, Toronto, on June 16th.

It was felt also that unless Ontario endeavored to appreciate the point of view of the thousands of enlisted French-Canadians, whose friends had the same attitude towards the war as the most earnest patriots in Ontario, we should miss the road to true statesmanship; and it therefore devolved upon Ontario, regarding itself as the leader among the Provinces, to search for some basis of national unity, without which national service for the war must be comparatively ineffective.

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It was clearly recognized that it was no part of Ontario's function to seek in any way to influence recruiting or any war work in Quebec—that responsibility remaining absolutely with the citizens there, and the duty of Ontario being limited to avoiding, as far as possible, embarrassment of their patriotic efforts.

The suggestion then was made by Mr. J. M. Godfrey that an effort towards a better mutual understanding between the races should be made by a delegation of, say, fifty representative Ontario men visiting Quebec to get in touch with a similar number of Canadian French—not for the purpose of settling outstanding controversies, but to ascertain the chances of a more friendly feeling being developed, without which the settlement of controversy could not hopefully be approached.

The estimate of the situation thus proposed to be served really anticipated the recent deliverance regarding Ireland by Premier Lloyd George, who said that the question of reaching a settlement in that country is chiefly one of atmosphere.

Mr. Godfrey's suggestion was unanimously endorsed by members of both political parties and of none, and Mr. Godfrey was authorized to take such steps as he deemed desirable to carry it into effect. Some of those interested visited the Province of Quebec in order to ascertain the sort of reception that might be accorded visitors from Ontario. The proposed visit was first publicly mentioned at the summer meeting of the Associated Boards of Trade of the Eastern Townships, at which the President of the Sherbrooke Board of Trade invited the Ontario delegates to visit that city, the population of which has changed within thirty years from being almost entirely English-

speaking to a proportion of two to one French-speaking, and in which the relations of the two races are of the friendliest quality.

The lead of the Sherbrooke Board of Trade was followed by the *Chambre de Commerce* of Montreal, which passed a cordial resolution; by a meeting of representative citizens of Three Rivers, called by the President of the *Chambre de Commerce*; and at a luncheon on July 12th in Quebec City given by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Evariste LeBlanc.

The Quebec Committee, which was appointed under the ægis of Sir Evariste LeBlanc, elected as its Chairman, Sir George Garneau, who is also Chairman of the National Battlefields Commission, and one of the foremost public men of the Province. Sir George Garneau's subsequent letter formally inviting an Ontario delegation to visit the Province, showed how cordially the idea had been welcomed everywhere by Canadians of French origin.

Thereafter a meeting was called in Toronto of representative professional and business leaders who, after learning all the facts, cordially endorsed the movement. A committee to arrange the trip to Quebec was appointed. This Committee included Col. R. W. Leonard of St. Catharines, Mr. A. E. Hewitt, President of the Toronto Board of Trade, Mr. S. R. Parsons, Vice-President of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Mr. A. E. Ames, of A. E. Ames & Co., and Mr. J. H. Gundy, of Wood, Gundy & Co.

In August the Ontario Committee held a meeting in Montreal with the Committee representing the four Quebec cities which it was proposed to visit. That meeting definitely decided upon the trip, and after a frank and friendly

discussion of the racial situation, unanimously passed the following resolution:—

“We, French and English-speaking Canadians, in conference assembled for the promotion of National Unity, having established, by friendly intercourse, a mutual respect and a firm conviction in the innate fair-mindedness of the vast majority of both races, do hereby place ourselves on record as of the unalterable belief that there is not now, nor ever will be in the future, any issue between the two races in Canada which cannot, and, of right, should not be amicably and equitably settled, and in such a manner as to give satisfaction to the great majority of all concerned.”

When the Ontario visit came to be organized in detail, it was found that the manufacturers particularly welcomed it, and the delegation contained a large proportion of leaders in the industrial world.

In the Maritime Provinces such interest in the movement was shown, that a special delegation was sent from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and a delegate also was present from Manitoba.

The visit took place on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, October 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th. To meet the train at Montreal there was a large gathering of representative French citizens, who furnished thirty-five automobiles instead of twenty asked for. The day was spent in visiting the High School of Commerce, the St. Louis Seminary, the Technical School, Mount Royal, and the Harbour. At night a banquet was held at the St. Denis Club, at which the speeches on both sides covered the whole ground of inter-racial relations in a spirit of frank cordiality. It was the general consensus of opinion that the pilgrimage was far more than justified by this one

event. It was proved that instead of candor between us causing ill-feeling, it immediately produces mutual respect and a desire for more intimate knowledge of each other's point of view. The hospitality of Montreal was unbounded, and the camaraderie of the hosts something to envy, even though it cannot be emulated by the more phlegmatic Ontario temperament.

On Tuesday, October 11th, a special train carried the guests and many of their hosts to Three Rivers, where luncheon was followed by a meeting at which inter-provincial trade relations were discussed in a printed address tendered by the city, and by individual addresses of welcome and response. During a steamer trip on the St. Lawrence to inspect the harbour, Col. Guthrie of Fredericton, gave a stirring account of his experiences at the front, which, along with other addresses of his at Montreal, Quebec, and Sherbrooke, made the excursion an apostolate for the war.

At Quebec that night there was a great banquet in the Chateau Frontenac, at which the local speeches dealt mainly with educational and other systems of administration which distinguish the Province, and the resolution passed by the Joint Committee in Montreal in August was enthusiastically adopted. Next morning there were receptions at the City Hall and Technical School and after a tour of the city, including the National Battlefields Park, luncheon was taken at Kent House, Montmorency Falls.

From Point Levis a special train over the Quebec Central Railway, carried the delegation and representatives from all four cities to Sherbrooke via Thetford Asbestos Mines, where a stop was made. At Sherbrooke two hundred citizens joined the pilgrims at dinner in the

Refectory of the St. Charles Seminary. The meal was prepared by nuns from Mont Notre Dame, and was served by students of the Seminary. The climax of the evening was reached when a loving cup was presented to Quebec by Ontario and passed round.

Next morning the company again visited the Seminary, where addresses were given by the principal and others, and national songs were sung in English and French by the students. Following a visit to the Convent of the Mont Notre Dame where a bilingual address was given by an Irish pupil, Bishop's College, Lennoxville, the Anglican University of Quebec, was visited. Dr. Parrock, the principal, said that to those who get along so admirably with their French-Canadian neighbors, it was difficult to understand why there should not be everywhere perfect harmony between the races. A Board of Trade luncheon concluded the entertainments of the pilgrimage, which disbanded in the evening at Montreal.

At the Sherbrooke banquet the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

“That Sir George Garneau and Mr. John M. Godfrey be requested to appoint a committee to make arrangements for the return visit to Ontario, and for a permanent organization to promote racial good-will along lines of interchange of public speaking on topics of common concern, the dissemination of printed matter, and the spread of inter-provincial information through educative institutions.”

On October 29th a meeting was held in Toronto at which the following committee was appointed to proceed with organizing the movement:—

Mr. S. R. Parsons	-	-	-	-	Toronto
A. E. Ames	-	-	-	-	Toronto
Ald. Dobbin	-	-	-	-	Peterboro
S. J. Williams	-	-	-	-	Kitchener
Colonel Mulloy	-	-	-	-	Kingston
A. T. Storey	-	-	-	-	Brockville
Kirwan Martin	-	-	-	-	Hamilton
D. A. Dunlap	-	-	-	-	Toronto
J. H. C. Pope	-	-	-	-	London
Colonel Leonard	-	-	-	-	St. Catharines
E. G. Henderson	-	-	-	-	Windsor
J. H. Gundy	-	-	-	-	Toronto
G. Y. Chown	-	-	-	-	Kingston
N. F. Davidson	-	-	-	-	Toronto
G. M. Murray	-	-	-	-	Toronto
J. M. Godfrey	-	-	-	-	Toronto
A. Hawkes	-	-	-	-	Toronto

On November 30th a meeting with the Quebec Committee appointed by Sir George Garneau was held in the Board of Trade Council Chamber, Montreal, at which it was decided to call the organization "The Bonne Entente", with Sir George Garneau as Chairman and Mr. John M. Godfrey as Vice-Chairman, the first council to consist of the thirty-four members already appointed, and an Executive of ten to be divided between the Provinces. The Executive is:

QUEBEC.

Sir George Garneau
Felix H. Hebert
Huntly Drummond
Zepherin Hebert
Hon. Mr. Justice Pelletier

ONTARIO.

John M. Godfrey
Col. Lorne Mulloy
A. E. Ames
S. R. Parsons
Kirwan Martin

At the Montreal meeting Ontario extended an invitation for a return visit to take place on January 8th, 9th, and 10th, which was accepted. It was felt that it was best to proceed without immediately making a rigid or elaborate organization, the spontaneous development which had occurred from the beginning offering the surest promise of a continuing motive force of racial good-will and national unity. The programme of the return visit is as follows:

Monday, January 8th.—Quebec delegates arrive at Toronto via Grand Trunk, at 7.30 a.m. Breakfast at the King Edward Hotel; reception at the City Hall; visit munition factory, and Hart House, University; luncheon at Burwash Hall by Victoria College; visit to Technical School; Convocation, at University, and banquet at King Edward Hotel, at which Sir Lomer Gouin, Premier of Quebec, and the Hon. W. H. Hearst, Premier of Ontario, will speak.

Tuesday, January 9th.—Train to Hamilton, C.P.R., 9.30 a.m.; reception at Hamilton City Hall; lunch at Connaught Hotel; informal conference during afternoon; banquet at Connaught Hotel.

Wednesday, January 10th.—Train to Niagara Falls, via T. H. & B. and Michigan Central, 8.58 a.m.; guests of Toronto Power Company, on Gorge Route trip; luncheon and visit to power plant; return to Toronto, leaving 11.00 p.m. train for Montreal.

OFFICE OF THE BONNE ENTENTE,
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